

A Forgiving Heart

Scripture Reading — Matthew 18:21-35

“This is how my . . . Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”
Matthew 18:35 —

The parable we’ve just read packs a punch that we quickly notice and cannot escape. It can even be distressing because it calls us to do something that is sometimes terribly difficult.

But we cannot escape the fact that our Savior is speaking about the need to be forgiving. He speaks about forgiving actions, about the way we should treat others who have wronged us. And as the parable closes, he makes clear that this is an issue of the heart first of all. Forgiveness begins inside.

The heart of a healthy forgiver is fully aware of how offensive we’ve been to God and how God has graciously forgiven us. It’s a heart that feels the pain others have inflicted on us, and it’s a heart that recognizes and admits that we have hurt others too.

The forgiving heart refuses to hide behind questions about the forgiveness process. It also refuses to look for excuses in the behavior of others, as if they don’t need to be forgiven—especially if they show no remorse or repentance for their actions.

The healthy heart takes a stance that is forgiving— always desiring it, ready to give it, never withdrawing it.

That’s a hard stance to take. Only those who have been washed in God’s forgiveness through Christ can even begin to develop the habits of the forgiving heart.

Prayer

Lord, you know how we’ve been hurt by others—and how we’ve hurt others too. Give us your forgiving Spirit so that we can forgive just as you have forgiven us. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#)

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